

7/2/19

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- 3: Notices taken from the  
Panay Review in 1925  
(1st edition) in 1933  
(2<sup>nd</sup> edition) → 1 notice  
from the jacket of the  
book
- 1 From the jacket
- 2 From two other  
newspapers not printed  
in the P.R.

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Please do not take any notice  
of my markings: I have no other copies  
Gwend. E.K.

i7p2CMCH24

Oct 1925

## An Essay Towards a Philosophy of Education.\*

### I.

From *The Statesman, Calcutta.*

#### THE DIGNITY OF CHILDHOOD.

This book is Miss Mason's swan song. It sums up the ideas which led to the foundation of the famous Ambleside institution more than thirty years ago and which have been developed as the result of experience during that period; and its author passed away while it was still in the press. The system founded by Miss Mason has admittedly done wonders for thousands of children. It has sent them out equipped with a rich vocabulary, a retentive memory, a store of the most varied knowledge, a desirable mental poise, and a wonderful appreciation of the best in art and literature; in short it has given them a liberal education. Its critics may and do say that it has failed to make mathematicians of them. On the other hand have we not been told that mathematicians are born and not made?

In her last volume Miss Mason sets out her philosophy of education with great wealth and variety of illustration. As she says in her preface "No statement that I have made in the following volume rests upon opinion only. Every point has been proved in thousands of instances and the method may be seen at work in many schools, large and small, elementary and secondary."

The theme is elaborated in an infinite variety of ways, but it is an essentially simple one. "Children are born

\*Readers of the PARENTS' REVIEW may like to see from time to time some of the Reviews of Miss Mason's last book, which are published with due acknowledgment to the Editors of the various papers.

poetry is more and more thoroughly worked, the possibility of lasting achievement in it becomes more difficult than ever. But the practice of that great art, and the acceptance of its fruitful traditions, has still other uses: to add a page or a phrase to the national achievement is worth a lifetime of its pursuit, but even to continue its living practice in a time of recession is to partake in its next great blossoming, though perhaps only by the work itself becoming part of a soil and compost of dead leaves in which the new seeds shall strike. Such should be the aim of the true poet. Only a true poet could so sink himself in devotion to his art; and only a true poet could so completely triumph over his own hesitation.

persons," says Miss Mason over and over again. She rather hints that they are bigger persons than their elders; but at the very least they are just as considerable. Being persons, they should be treated with respect. The most fatal mistake made by obsolete educational methods was to assume that a child was a mere automaton, to be drilled into acquiring a certain quantum of information, generally against its will. The fact which Miss Mason claims to have demonstrated is that the child has such a burning thirst for knowledge that, if the teacher will give it a chance, it will educate itself. And that is the secret of the Ambleside method. The child educates itself, with the teacher acting as a guide during the process rather than a forcing pump, and the results are set forth in a thousand instances in which children have done things easily and naturally which would have classified them as infant prodigies half a century ago. The lines on which Miss Mason worked are illustrated by the following interesting passage on Attention:—

"Attention, we know, is not a 'faculty,' nor a definable power of mind but is the ability to turn on every such power, to concentrate, as we say. We throw away labour in attempting to produce or train this necessary function. There it is in every child in full measure, a very Niagara of force, ready to be turned on in obedience to the child's own authority and capable of infinite resistance to authority imposed from without."

It is not surprising to find the book pervaded by a deeply religious atmosphere. How is it possible to love and reverence childhood without a profound perception of the truth that the pure in heart shall see God? "If we believe," we read, "that knowledge is the principal thing, that knowledge is tri-partite, and that the fundamental knowledge is the knowledge of God, we shall bring up our children as students of Divinity, and shall pursue our own life-long studies in the self-same school."

Here is a last arresting passage:—"Human nature has not failed; what has failed us is philosophy, and that applied philosophy which is called education."

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## II.

From *The Irish Statesman*.

"Lord God, how many good and clean wits of children be nowadays perished by ignorant schoolmasters," So

1925

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wrote Elyot in 1531, and in 1925 we are scarcely in a position to contradict him. Education remains what it has always been, a sort of step-daughter to philosophy, unloved at that. A science which deals in perfection must always be intolerant of a science which deals with men. "Change education and you change the world," is a phrase we are continually hearing, as though man held in his own hands the key to all his difficulties if only he chose to use it. Yes, but can you change education? Or rather you can change education, but can you change men?

We count Miss Charlotte Mason amongst the greatest educators. Writing of her after her death, Sir Michael Sadler said, "Like Thring, of Uppingham, she realised that education is the transmission of life, of the life of the mind, kindled by the fiery particles which lie unquenched in noble literature." Her work, not nearly as widely known as it ought to be, is yet slowly and steadily spreading, and this book should have the effect of introducing it to a wider public. Already in England her method, originally devised for Secondary School children, has been applied with signal success to the Primary School, and one county at least is practising it in the majority of its schools.

It is not easy to summarise a philosophy of education in a few words, but Miss Mason's is almost summarised in the quotation with which she begins the Short Synopsis of her aims. "No sooner doth the truth . . . come into the soul's sight but the soul knows her to be her first and old acquaintance." That motto could not be bettered. It says everything. She is in the succession of Comenius. She believes in, "All knowledge for all men." Her book is a recognition of the value of two principles. This is one of them—the importance of the food with which we supply the mind. The second is the importance of the personality of the child. She believed that in education you are dealing with the soul, not with a machine.

Starting, then, from these two principles, she evolves her method. Her method is known, and it has been tried now for thirty years, so that it comes to us in a measure vindicated. She believed in teaching "literature." The great minds of the past were to be allowed to speak direct, without intermediary, to the child. What the mind of the

child was ready for it would accept, what it was not ready for no well-meaning interference upon the part of the teacher would make acceptable or do anything except create a distaste. . . .

This was only one of her discoveries. Her philosophy contains much else besides. She never forgot that children were persons. "Children are born *persons*. They are not born either good or bad but with possibilities for good or evil." She believed that they should be taught that "the chief responsibility which rests on them as persons is the acceptance or rejection of ideas." Who in Ireland at the present time is going to deny this? To help them in that choice they were to be given, "principles of conduct and a wide knowledge fitted to them." . . . . Altogether a book for teacher and parent alike to buy and to study.

### III.

From *The Observer*.

#### THE PROBLEM OF THE TEACHER.

BY DR. EDWARD LYTTELTON.

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There is a multitude here, and in other lands, to whom this lucid exposition of vitally important principle and of the method of its application will come as a veritable discovery.

But this will depend on our shaking ourselves free of an erroneous view of the nature and working of the human mind. Most people still believe that inside every child is a kind of invisible keg or cask into which knowledge is poured by the teacher in the hope that a certain amount of it may stick. The teacher, it is presumed, has learnt how to do this; for the ordinary citizen it presents the most formidable and bewildering difficulties. It is true that among professional teachers there have always been some who from painful experience learn that this method of pouring in is more complex than it is often supposed to be, and depends in some mysterious fashion on the exciting of "interest" in the child. This, again, is thought to depend on the subject chosen. Hence a vast amount of controversy, every disputant putting

forward the claims of the particular subject which his own great mind found to be congenial at an early age.

Meantime a dismal fact, ignored by all teachers as far as possible, persists: undeniable and most baffling to us all. It is that whereas practically all children love learning, and gather knowledge rapidly, joyously, and permanently, something happens between seven and seventeen which in nearly all cases has destroyed the love of knowledge for its own sake. It is to be noticed that the beginning of this sterilising epoch coincides with the calling in of the teacher; and the gradual diminution of interest in the child goes on even if the teaching be what we call thoroughly stimulating, anyhow, zealous, careful, conscientious. Miss Mason has, I am convinced, rightly diagnosed the mischief, and, more than that, has invented a method which, while not difficult to learn, has produced extraordinarily good results. But everything must depend on the theory being thoroughly understood, and it is to be feared that modern life is marked by a disinclination to give patient consideration to any theory: we prefer to jump to practical results.

The child requires no stimulus, because his interest in the natural process of assimilating knowledge never fails. Nature presents him with an environment full of suggestion. Much is added by stories his elders tell him, and he feeds his mind just as he feeds his body, by taking in facts for which he is prepared, i.e., those related to other facts already lodged within, and ignoring the rest—just as he eats what food he likes, but rejects the rest. Hence both eating and learning are pleasurable and natural activities; not a passive otiose recipience, but an apprehension; an active assimilation; and we remember that according to Dr. Mackail education means feeding.

Now the trouble is that when the teacher comes in at about seven years old there begins an ingestion of unpalatable subjects into the child's mind, such as grammar and arithmetic, and perhaps the Latin vocabulary. These, let us notice, are concerned not with what we call knowledge such as the child has hitherto thriven on, but with sharpening the logical faculty, just as if to the tender digestive organs an electrical stimulus were applied. Now, is it not clear to the least analytical of our readers that this clarify-

ing process will only be useful if the more important question is being attended to all along, viz., the giving of something to digest? Miss Mason saw plainly that this is exactly what the ordinary elementary education has failed to do. My impression is that in the grammar and public schools the omission has been still more serious. Perhaps some good work has been done by the encouragement given to history and science. But very few teachers yet have firmly grasped the principle of the child's natural power of assimilating and rejecting. Every possible effort should be made to allow this double faculty to continue its healthy exercise. This brings us to the Mason method, which is fully explained and illustrated in the volume before us.

. . . . The most deadly of all our defects in education has been the neglect of the imagination. Miss Mason has not neglected it, but encourages it, knowing that time will correct the mistakes, supplemented by teachers in the teens. How sensible it all is! Up till recently in all schools dominated by the Cambridge influence boys have been starved in respect of knowledge and have had nothing to think about except games. In many elementary schools the results of the new method have been surprising to all except to those who see the difference between feeding the mind and merely stimulating the logical faculty.

Two undeniable gains are already certain. The strain on the teachers will be greatly lightened, because so much of the learning is done by active apprehension on the part of the children, and does not depend on the rare power of stimulus in the teacher. It is a lamentable fact that conscientious keenness on the part of the teachers has brought on the terrible mischief known as "spoon-feeding." The Mason method is free from it.

It is devoutly to be hoped that managers of schools, head masters and mistresses of secondary schools will read this volume attentively, as well as the authorities in the Board of Education.

#### IV.

From *The Teachers' World*.

This, Miss Charlotte Mason's last book, which she did not live to see in print, in many ways sums up her teaching

advise that so-and-so should 'run wild' for a year. Poor little soul, at the very moment when he is most in need of knowledge for his sustenance he is left to prey upon himself! No wonder the nervous symptoms become worse."

"Fear is no longer the acknowledged basis of school discipline; we have methods more subtle than the mere terrors of the law. Love is one of these. The person of winning personality attracts his pupils (or hers), who will do anything for his sake, and are fond and eager in all their ways, docile to that point where personality is submerged, and they live on the smiles, perish on the averted looks of the adored teacher. Parents look on with a smile, and think that all is well; but Bob or Mary is losing that growing time which should make a self-dependent, self-ordered person, and is day by day becoming a parasite who can only go as he is carried, the easy prey of fanatic or demagogue."

"Education implies a continuous going forth of the mind; but whatever induces introspection or any form of self-consciousness holds up, as it were, the intellectual powers and brings progress to a standstill. . . . It may be that the mind as well as the body has its regions where *noli me tangere* is a counsel of expedience; and, by the time we have dealt with those functions of the mind which we know, we may find ourselves in a position to formulate that which we certainly do not possess, a science—should it not be a philosophy?—of education."

These three quotations may serve to show something of Miss Mason's independence of outlook; they probably are not the best that could have been chosen. The value of the book is enhanced by an excellent index.

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Dec. 1925

## An Essay towards a Philosophy of Education.\*

REVIEWS (Continued from page 700).

### IV.

"Most teachers know the main educational principles of Miss Mason, and the useful work of the 'Parents' National Educational Union,' which was founded by her. Many will be glad to read this full and reasoned account of her philosophy." (From *The Journal of Education*). 6

### V.

"Miss Mason deals simply and sympathetically with the child as a self-educator, and with the nature and extent of the co-operation by parent or teacher. She deserves to be carefully read in the home and in the school. Unless her standpoint is accepted there can be no real education, for it is fundamentally true that no one can teach a child anything—the child must be its own teacher." (From *The Glasgow Herald*). 7

### VI.

"The late Miss Mason brought enthusiasm born of conviction to the writing of 'An Essay towards a Philosophy of Education.' Many of her theories will arouse opposition, but many teachers will welcome the protest which is the very groundwork of it. The teacher's task is *not* to teach how to learn, but to teach *something*. The child wishes to learn,

\*Readers of the PARENTS' REVIEW may like to see from time to time some of the Reviews of Miss Mason's last book, which are published with due acknowledgment to the Editors of the various papers. 8

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and Miss Mason almost says knows how to learn.' (From *The Schoolmaster*).

## VII.

*9* "This is a book which deserves to be considered seriously by educational reformers. We welcome particularly the recognition that an educational programme can only justify itself if it can be applied to the whole nation—to the children of the poor as well as those who are better off." (From *The Church Times*).

## VIII.

*10* "Miss Mason's essay is, indeed, a valuable and serious contribution to Education itself and to the psychology on which true education must rest. It is refreshing to meet this hopeful, definite and imaginative outlook. In so far as it expresses this, the volume is an appropriate memorial to a pioneer. As she says, children have a desire and capacity for knowledge—which education can kill and stifle as well as foster and feed. Here is set out, both theory and practice, the right way, the way along which the ideal of a 'Liberal Education for All' can be secured." (From *Time and Tide*).

## IX.

*11* "The late Miss Charlotte Mason was not merely a brilliant teacher, but by her work in connection with the Parents' National Educational Union she made a powerful attack on public apathy at its most vulnerable point. . . This essay is more in the nature of a statement of faith than a philosophical treatise. As a record of the ideas which came to a great teacher in the course of many years' practical experience it will be of permanent value to all educationalists. . . There is much here to help on their way even those who find it necessary to take a sternly practical view of the functions of education." (From *The Daily News*).

## X.

*12* "To appraise Miss Mason fairly we must study the schools she founded and the Parents' National Educational Union, which she called into being to propagate her system. There is much that is sound and timely in the system. The belief that education is essentially a process of nourishment,

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not of mere spontaneous development; the faith in the child as a person with the rights of a person, especially the right to judge of his own needs in the way of knowledge; the ceaseless emphasis upon knowledge as the educational organ, on recognition of 'atmosphere' in the sense of the whole social and spiritual environment as something more than just ordinary pedagogic routine; and the stress upon discipline and sound habits as the goal of knowledge and the measure of its efficiency: all these are valuable doctrines." (From *The Cape Times*).

## XI.

*13* "To those hitherto unacquainted with Miss Mason's previous work it is clear that a discourse upon the theory and practice of education along lines like this must open up new avenues of thought. She was a woman, not of one idea, but of a large and sagacious mind—one of those unobtrusive yet powerful thinkers whose real greatness will better be appreciated by future generations than their modesty suffers it to be by their own." (From *The Guardian*).

## XII.

*14* "The late Miss Mason was the Prophet of the P.N.E.U. and like all prophets, from Isaiah onwards, she was an enthusiast. . . The P.N.E.U. has certainly achieved some admirable results and there is much good sense as well as eloquence, in Miss Mason's plea." (From *The Times of India*).

## XIII.

*15* "I have finished Miss Mason's book. It seems to me a really great book, full of wisdom and understanding, counsel and strength." (From a P.N.E.U. Parent).

## XIV.

BY WILLINGHAM F. RAWNSLEY.

*16* Miss Mason's posthumous volume is certainly a great book in many ways and it abounds in remarkable dicta. Its main purpose perhaps is to insist on some facts of which we as a rule have not taken sufficient note, until she showed us the way, viz., that the mind of a child, and quite a

young child, is capable of taking in and assimilating a great deal, if conveyed to the child pleasantly and if the child brings to the consideration of it a close attention.

Inattention makes, as we all know, the efforts of the hardworking teacher perfectly futile. The teacher labours and the child wearies, but learns little.

Miss Mason's first principle then is to secure a full attention throughout the class, and this she has succeeded in obtaining from the lowest class upwards, and in a way which is permanent for the children through all their school days and after. This once gained, the rest is easy; the children labour and the teacher supervises and is able to manage quite a large class with ease, and with profit to the children.

The mode of gaining attention is this: the children in the lower class listen to some episode read in a pleasant voice with intelligence by the teacher, half a page is enough at first. Then a boy or girl is called on to come out and facing the class to "narrate" what has just been read; the child may stumble or even fail, but no help is given by the teacher, only another child may suggest the word wanted, and no rebuke is given to them, boy or girl, but a little praise for doing its best. Some other child tries, and eventually the task is managed, and then a bit more of the story is read. But *nothing is read more than once*; there lies the secret of the method, for each child knows that what he listens to will only be read once, so that unless he gives his entire attention he is out of the game.

This soon fosters a habit of full attention which lasts apparently through life. So much for Narration, which in the higher classes is so perfect that I have heard a little girl of 10 say off without a single omission or blunder a whole page or more. Attention being secured, and in so pleasant a manner, the next great axiom of Miss Mason's method, that what children crave for, is knowledge, is satisfied by the provision of really good literature in which knowledge is conveyed in good English; and the children are quite remarkably quick to appreciate this, and reject poor English, and trashy writing at once.

Plutarch's Lives, Shakespeare's Plays, standard works of History, Scott's novels, stories from the Classics of

Greece and Rome, and many books, provided they are real literature, are read with avidity and if not altogether understood at first, that does not signify, for the full comprehension of what is, in a first reading, not quite understood comes later; and there comes too with absolute certainty the power of expression and of putting thoughts into words in really good English; also there comes without effort correct spelling. This is acquired by the reading whether in class or alone of many hundreds of pages of good English literature and in what Miss Mason rightly calls teaching by "the humanities," doing in fact for the children in their own language what is done for university students in the classics when they read for the School of *Literae Humaniores*.

Hear what Miss Mason says, on p. 191, on the way in which the children's powers of comprehension and assimilation grow: "Children must not be teased or instructed about the use of stops or capital letters. These things too come by Nature to the child who reads, and the teacher's instructions are apt to issue in the use of a pepper-box for commas. We do not say that children should never read well-intentioned second-rate books, but certainly they should not read these in school hours by way of lessons. From their earliest days they should get the habit of reading literature which they should take hold of for themselves, much or little, in their own way. As the object of every writer is to explain himself in his own book the child and the author must be trusted together without the intervention of the middleman. What his author does not tell him he must go without knowing for the present. No explanation will really help him, and explanations of words and phrases spoil the text, and should not be attempted unless children ask, 'What does so and so mean?' when other children in the class will probably tell."

After reading a couple of thousand pages in a term children will be less in need of constant supervision, and will be only delighted to have more and more unfolded to their growing capacity for intelligent assimilation, and they will be able to state what they have read when called on for it months after they have read it.

But all the time the child must labour and not the teacher.

Hence it comes to pass that, as I have often heard from their own lips, that no teacher who has embarked on Miss Mason's method would go back to the ordinary Elementary School system on any account whatever.

Miss Mason follows Matthew Arnold in dividing all teaching into three heads, the knowledge about God, the knowledge about Man, and the knowledge about the Universe; and attaches the greatest importance to the first of these as being the knowledge of what is the greatest, hence the prominence she gives to sound religious teaching. One thing is always kept in view in selecting the books to be read—viz.: that no snippets of an author should be selected, but a whole volume or poem is given for study so that the children may acquire some knowledge of the author. And beside the reading of books the method has introduced the study, by means of good reproductions, of the best pictures by the great masters, ancient and modern, thus combining History and Art and opening a new world to the children.

This widening of the mind and the interests which come with it do not at all encroach on the time given to such valuable subjects as needlework, music and drawing, and cooking and such other hobbies as dancing and carpentry and gardening and the learning of poetry and even the writing of it; when all the children are interested and busily engaged in teaching themselves there is no time wasted; the main curriculum is completed in the morning, leaving all the afternoon free for these pastimes.

Here it may be well to quote again from the book. On p. 241 Miss Mason recapitulating says: 'The children, not the teachers, are the responsible persons,' and Miss Mason from the beginning has always insisted on each child being recognised as *a person*.

'The children do the work by self effort. The teachers give the uplift of their sympathy in the work and where necessary elucidate, sum up or enlarge, but the actual work is done by the scholars.'

These read in a term from one thousand to between two and three thousand pages according to age and class in a large number of set books. The quantity set for each lesson allows of only a single reading.'

The reading is tested by narration, or by writing on any

test passage. There is no revision before an examination; too much ground has been covered. But what the children have read they know, and can write on any part of it with ease and fluency in vigorous English and they usually spell well. Some write better on history, some on science; some do best in arithmetic, others in literature, but practically all know the answers to the set questions.

Finally the examinations are not for places or prizes, but just to make sure that the children have really assimilated what they have read. The love of knowledge carries them forward with no need for any added stimulus, and no explanations and elucidations are so helpful as the child's own pondering over his book, except where he himself asks for help.

'That children are born persons is the first article of the educational *credo* which I am concerned to advance' says Miss Mason, and she adds: 'this implies that they come to us with power of attention, avidity for knowledge, channels of thought, nice discrimination in books, even before they can read, and the power of dealing with many subjects.' 'The methods I have indicated,' she adds, 'are especially suited for large classes. What is called 'the sympathy of numbers' stimulates the class and the work goes with added impetus, each child is eager to take part in narration or to do written work well. By the way, only short test answers are required in writing so that the labour of correction is minimized.'

After seeing for myself several of the schools which are fortunate enough to be working on this method the most striking thing to me was the universal look of brightness and intelligent interest which showed itself in all the faces of the children in every class.

As Miss Mason puts it 'It is good that the grand elementary principle of pleasure should be discovered in unexpected places, in what is too often the drudgery of the schoolroom.' On visiting a class at work it is abundantly evident that there is nothing but delight in their studies and eagerness to get forward depicted on one countenance after another both among the girls and the boys: and it becomes evident when you come to examine their work closely, that children of every class come into the world with equal

brains; circumstances may help one more than another and heredity has more freedom to tell in some than in others, but the children are born equal in brain-power in all classes, and only want the opportunity of shewing it, and this opportunity the Mason method of education as applied in Elementary Schools is giving them.

17p20CMC424  
Jan: 1932

## AN ESSAY TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION.

By CHARLOTTE M. MASON.

WE are sure that members of the P.N.E.U. will be interested to read, if they have not already done so, the following reviews of the attractive new edition of Miss Mason's "An Essay Towards a Philosophy of Education," which has just been brought out by Messrs. Dent. (7/6) :—

*The Scots Observer* :—" This book is the work of Miss Charlotte M. Mason who founded the worldwide movement known as the Parents' National Education Union. Such a writer naturally has a large public and on this occasion her public will be more than satisfied. Miss Mason aims at 'a liberal education for all,' and she endeavours to show such an ideal can be achieved. Briefly put, her theory is this. All children have a certain endowment of intelligence. The function of education should therefore be not merely to stimulate intelligence but to inculcate habits of acquiring vast quantities of knowledge. She tells us that education is at one and the same time an atmosphere, a discipline, and a life, and she outlines the methods whereby the child-mind may be harmoniously developed. Most valuable chapters follow on the knowledge of man and of the universe. Still more interesting sections are those on the curricula in elementary and secondary schools. After a sane consideration of the work attempted in continuation classes, she concludes with a brilliant chapter on education as a basis of national strength. Miss Mason is no mere fluent theorist with the knack of writing brightly on a hackneyed subject. All through this long book she quotes frequently from her experience as teacher and examiner. Excerpts are given from pupils' examination papers. As she says on page 313—' The nation is in sore need of wise men,

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and these must be made out of educated boys.' Every teacher and educationist should read this excellent book."

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*The Cambridge Daily News* :—“ Miss Mason in this volume explains that the wholesome and natural way of teaching is to let the child's desire for knowledge operate in the child and so guide the teacher. It is an experimental system but still holds to discipline and tradition. It is to get back to the methods of nature. She writes on behalf of the Parents' National Educational Union. Education is passing through anxious days. The errors have turned on the wrong conceptions of the 'mind' of the child. Teachers are looking for some sound theory now, and in this book is a wealth of thought on topics of all sorts which every teacher will find extremely valuable. Specially noteworthy is the section on education as an atmosphere, a discipline and a life. The theory advanced is explained and applied in the latter half of the book, and all taken together produces what might be termed a revolutionary and far-reaching system which is worth consideration. Apart from the system advocated the matter is of supreme interest.”

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*The Journal of the Assistant Masters' Association* :—“ This is a reprint of the important work first published in 1925. Many will be glad to read it or to read it again. We are tempted to make two quotations for the benefit of those, if such there be, who still think that Miss Mason's system is not 'disciplinary' enough—‘Teaching may be so watered down and sweetened, teachers may be so suave and condescending, as to bring about a condition of intellectual feebleness and moral softness which is not easy for a child to overcome.’ And ‘There is no occasion for panic, but it is time that we realised that *to fortify the will* is one of the great purposes of education.’”

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*Record* :—“ This book first appeared in 1925, with a preface by Dr. Lyttelton, and it is now reprinted in a very pleasant shape. Miss Mason's essay is already too well known to require any detailed commentary ; the results of it may be seen, in all parts of the world, in the system known as the P.N.E.U. (Parents' National Educational Union). The Press is continually issuing books on education : some of them wise, some not so wise. This is one of the former class. It is full of suggestive reflections ; more than that, it sets out a scheme of teaching that is really practical, helpful, and founded on scientific common sense. Dull would he (or she) be who could read the book without an enrichment of mind.”

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*The Schoolmaster* :—“ This book is an eloquent exposition of the philosophic ideas underlying the P.N.E.U. Method. One

## AN ESSAY TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION. 51

of the keys to the book and to the method is the passage on page 62 urging that all children even backward children, are aware of their needs and pathetically eager for the food they require—this food being the actual works of the masters in art and literature, not paraphrases and explanations or school books in the commonly accepted sense. . . . ”

[We publish these reviews with due acknowledgments to the Editors of the several papers.—ED.]

## BOOKS.

*Whither? A Study of Shams and Safeguards*, by the Rev. the Hon. Edward Lyttelton, D.D. (John Murray, 7/6.) This is a bold and uncom-promising book. The late Headmaster of Eton intends to make us think and feel uncomfortable and he succeeds in making us do both. He deals very frankly with many phases of modern life, including churchgoing and the Sacraments, education, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, duties and pleasures. He tells us in the preface that the book is addressed to all who would "fain see good days," and he warns us that there is nothing in his pages of "profound analysis; no learning; hardly a hint of mystic rapture; only a warning and a hope; threshold-thoughts for pilgrims who hesitate to enter the King's palace, or do not know that they are in it already." Dr. Lyttelton's readers may not always agree with him, but we believe they will welcome a book written with the courage of long experience. In his Introduction he says:—"Like the Athenians of old we seem to hanker after some new thing: but it is abundantly certain that what we require is a quickened understanding of something that is old." And it is towards this quickened understanding that Dr. Lyttelton would lead us. Members of the P.N.E.U. will be particularly interested in the chapter on "Education or Spiritual Self-feeding," in which some twenty pages are given to showing what Miss Mason has contributed towards this "quickened understanding" in the matter of education.

*The Sienese Painters of the Trecento*. (Warne, 31/6.) This is a sumptuous volume, well bound and well printed with an attractive page and type, and with 256 beautiful reproductions in collotype of the work of the Sienese painters of the Trecento. There is an historical account of their work by Emilio Cecchi, translated from the Italian by Leonard Penlock; 140 pages of letterpress; a short bibliography; twenty pages of notes on the plates, and then the plates themselves which are well produced. Such a book is a wonderful introduction to Sienese art, and those who already know and love the Sienese painters will welcome the opportunity of studying at leisure many old favourites as well as making a further acquaintance of Masters with whom they are not so familiar.

*Education for Life*, by Noelle Davies, M.A., Ph.D. (Williams and Norgate, 7/6.) The publishers have done well to give us so full an account of the work of the great Danish pioneer, Grundtvig, and of the People's High School Movement in Denmark. Grundtvig's work as a reformer and writer, his theory of the "living word" and his ideal of life are studied in successive chapters. The development of the High School in Denmark, and in other countries too, since 1844 is also discussed. In these days it seems strange to read of Grundtvig's insistence upon the spoken word somewhat to the exclusion of the written word. No doubt the explanation is that books were as hard to come by in Denmark as they were in England in the thirties and forties. The Appendices on the High School programmes and time-tables are particularly interesting, and the picture that is given of the young students who came to him three or four evenings a week to listen to lectures on Greek and Scandinavian myths read aloud and explained, is most attractive. He writes (page 182) "It was a proof to me that young men, at that age and with the freshness which peasants' sons possess, can take in a great deal, if only they receive it in a living fashion by way of the ear." And he adds later on "Of course, it is no use to put many books into the young men's hands." Had books been as easy to procure as they are in these days it is possible that less oral teaching would have been given.

*With the Migratory Birds to Africa*, by Bengt Berg. (Jonathan Cape, 10/6.) The author is a well-known naturalist and traveller whose books

## AN ESSAY TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION.

By CHARLOTTE M. MASON.

### II.

(From further reviews of the new Edition, (Dent, 7/6)) \*:—

*The Aberdeen Journal* :—"A great many parents and many if not all professed educationists have heard of the P.N.E.U. The moving spirit in this system of instruction is Miss Mason, of Ambleside, who has written voluminously on educational subjects. In this volume she unfolds at full length the salient principles of her philosophy. Most of the modern panaceas—'rhythmic movements, independent action, self expression in various interesting ways' are desirable, and are by no means to be neglected, yet 'we of the Parents' Union have a different point of view, and we are profoundly sceptical as to the effect of all or any of these activities upon character and conduct. A person is not built up from without but from within.' And children are born persons. What this means educationally is here explained. Again teachers are aware of more than mind and body in their dealings with children. There is the rich endowment of the moral nature with its possibilities for good and corresponding possibilities for evil. Here teachers are warned against torrents of talk, tedious repetition, objurgation, and recrimination, whereby the mind may be bored and deadened. Speaking of emulation, Miss Mason observes that it works wonders in the hands of the schoolmaster but urges that it has its dangers in the intellectual field. 'Nothing worse could have happened to our schools than the system of marks, prizes, place taking, by which many of our schools are practically governed.' And thus it happens, 'that the last desire we have to consider, the desire of knowledge, is commonly deprived of its proper function in our schools by the predominance of other springs of action, especially of emulation, the desire of place, and avarice, the desire of wealth, tangible profit.' Miss Mason would allow the schoolmaster but three educational instruments—the atmosphere of environment, the discipline of habit, and the presentation of living ideas. Teachers will

\* With due acknowledgement to the Editors of the papers quoted.

Feb. 1932.

him continually, grieving no more for that which is too high for her, but only rejoicing in his gracious benediction. Here, too, among the lawns, I would raise an arbour mantled with vine and ivy dear to Bacchus and beside should grow the poppies of Morpheus, that drowsy god of dream.

The trees encompassing my garden should be, first, oaks, for a remembrance of those good old folk, Philemon and Baucis and the mercy of Zeus who, hearing their prayer that one might not live longer than the other, changed both into those noble trees. Also would these oaks call to mind that branch reverently stricken from the sacred tree at Dodona by the sword of Jason, while Orpheus, the grieving god, bright haired, and bearing his seven stringed lyre, stood silent by, in the blue shadow of those holy boughs—that branch which afterwards, nailed to the prow of the good ship Argo by the hands of heroes, counselled them with miraculous voice in the hour of peril and perplexity. Again, the oaks encompassing my garden would surely bring to mind that ancient tree beneath which Aeacus prayed to Zeus and beheld a myriad ants changed into Myrmidons.

Other trees beloved of gods should also spread their gracious boughs nearby. Daphne, whose fleeing feet and outstretched arms were changed into the green laurel before the wondering eyes of Apollo, and many a fruit tree beloved of Pomona, nymph of the autumn fruitage, and bearing all the sweets of her orchard.

If the winter were kind to green things in the land of my garden there would I also plant orange trees that I might think of that Hesperian fruit watched by the vigilant daughters of the Evening Star, in their blessed isle, and the comely olive, whose mantle of leaves the wind changes all to silver when it turns them about; the olive, Athene's gift to her loved city. Yet in my garden of immortals the least should be greatest for in a sun warm corner should grow those precious and lowly herbs which Aesculapius plucked and crushed with deft hands for the healing of mankind, and beside these, that most blessed of all green things, the little plant called Moly, "which Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave"—for the cleansing and healing of the soul.

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find much that is stimulating and suggestive on these matters. Book II. discusses how the theory expounded in Book I. should be applied. A last quotation may be allowed. 'The multitudinous things that every person wants to know must be made accessible in the schoolroom, not by diagrams, digests, and abstract principles; but boys and girls like "Kit's little brother" must learn "what oysters is" by "supping on oysters" . . .'

*The British Weekly* :—"The mysterious initials P.N.E.U. have come in the course of a generation to mean far more than when they first piqued the curiosity of teachers. Then they represented Charlotte Mason's bold attempt to reform education by calling in the aid of fathers and mothers and beginning with the home. Now they stand for a type of private school organised in accordance with the principles and methods set forth in this book as well as for a movement within public and State-controlled schools. The re-issue of the 'Philosophy' six years after it was originally published bears witness to the steady spread of Charlotte Mason's ideas no less than to successful propaganda on the part of the Parents' National Educational Union. Miss Mason revolted against every kind of education which failed to recognise and respect the child as a person, 'a spiritual organism,' with a natural appetite for the most varied and ample diet of knowledge, from which, if the supply is sufficient and the opportunity for self-activity adequate, the child itself will make the wisest and most effective selection. Education, as she saw it, is an atmosphere, a discipline, and a life; the 'two guides to moral and intellectual self-management' which she would offer to children are 'the way of the will and the way of reason.' In other words, children should be trained in the acceptance or rejection of ideas as their personal responsibility, arriving thus at the formation of character and the experience of religion. Valuing highly games, handwork, and other factors in the educational process, Miss Mason's distinctive method lies in the almost unlimited use of books, the children being required, after once reading a passage or hearing it read, to reproduce it in their own way. The 'Philosophy' shows how this plan works out in terms of the curriculum of Miss Mason's Parents' Union School. . . . Undoubtedly Miss Mason herself actually used ordinary methods more than she was aware, just as modern teachers constantly apply her principles without knowing how great a debt they owe to her. But there is still all too much need that her voice should be heard, and her book is as fresh and stimulating as when it came hot from her facile pen and her enthusiastic heart."

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*The Oxford Mail*:—“Miss Mason, the originator of the Parents’ National Education Union, has put before us very comprehensively in this book the philosophy on which that system is based. The layman to-day may feel that there are too many voices crying in the wilderness of education; but here at any rate is one who speaks with authority. Parents and teachers and all interested in the upbringing of children would do well to listen. Miss Mason shows that any true educational system must be based on the fact that it is as natural for the child to learn as it is to eat; and she convinces us that the intellectual apathy so common during adolescence (the great difficulty of all secondary teachers) is not inevitable. Education, she insists, must be self-education, and the prime necessity is contact of mind with mind. Her theory is throughout enriched and enlightened by a wide personal experience and the judgments of great thinkers. It is good to see that in her chapters devoted to Applied Theory she faces the most urgent problem of democratic education—that we must be taught to recognise true goodness, how to distinguish between the noble and the ignoble in our leaders and our fellows.

## EDUCATIONAL RENAISSANCE.\*

AN ESSAY TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION.

By CHARLOTTE M. MASON.

(J. M. Dent &amp; Sons, Ltd., 7/6.) Reprinted, 1931.

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*The Preparatory Schools’ Review*.—“This book aims at greater freedom for the child, a wider curriculum and the abolition of the dangers of classroom tyranny and the personality of the master dwarfing his boys and cramping their ideas. Don’t you know the feeling, when you go into class to face a crowd of eager, expectant faces, to feed minds eager for knowledge—don’t you know sometimes the feeling of complete inadequacy to cope with such wonders? Don’t you on occasions feel how ill-equipped you are to throw light on all their eager questionings and keep their mental appetite stimulated? Then there are the dangers of the system of putting boys on reports, driving them to their work; dull text-books; vain repetitions of the same work leading to a complete lack of desire for knowledge; the smugness often apparent in the clever boy, a mere armour of defence against the patronizing attitude of the hearty athletes; the cramming necessary for many boys before examinations; the boring talk of dull masters and the duller talk of the master parading himself before his form; the falseness of marks, stars and stripes, prizes and too eager competition; the lack of scope in the curriculum at many schools, and the lack of opportunity for boys to do things, make things, say things, and develop their own individuality.

“Answers to many of these difficulties seem to be found in the late Miss Mason’s book describing the methods of the Parents’

\*From further reviews of the new edition reprinted with due acknowledgments to the editors of the papers quoted. We owe the title Educational Renaissance to *The Preparatory Schools’ Review*.

- (9) *The Preparatory Schools’ Review*. (3/1932.)
- (10) *The Nottingham Guardian*. (15/2/1932.)
- (11) *The Church Times*. (12/2/1932.)
- (12) *Liverpool Post*. (20/1/1932.)
- (13) *Everyman*. (28/1/1932.)
- (14) *Great Thoughts*. (2/1932.)
- (15) *Book Readers’ Guide*. (2/1932.)

Ovpt 1932

## NATURE NOTES.

## II.

August 2nd, 1930. The Rev. A. Thornley showed me a *Sphex sabulosa* at his garden gate (St. Ives, Cornwall). She had already made a hole close to a granite step, a nice hot, sunny corner. The Sphex, an inch long, was trying to drag along a large green caterpillar which she had already paralysed, and which was longer than the Sphex and so large round that she could only get hold of it at one end or the other. In order to hasten matters (for we had been called in to tea) Mr. Thornley picked up the caterpillar—it was some 8 inches from the hole—and put it near the mouth of the hole. But the Sphex would have none of it and pushed and pulled the caterpillar some inches from the hole. Then she started pushing and pulling it back to the hole. When she got it to the mouth of the hole again the Sphex disappeared down the burrow, then came up, head foremost, and dragged the caterpillar down.

Another Sphex (female) had been flying round all the time, and no sooner had the caterpillar disappeared than she (No. 2) started scratching sand down the hole with her fore feet like a squirrel burying nuts. Then she picked up two tiny granite pebbles, huge for her size, and threw them on to the top of the hole. Then out came Sphex No. 1. She lowered her head and arched her bulbous tail and ran at the busybody, driving her off. Then she picked off the two pebbles and scratched away the sand that Sphex No. 2 had scratched in. After waiting a second or two she started scratching the sand in on her own account, working round the mouth of the hole. Then she went away four or five inches and selected, after rejecting several, two more pebbles, with which she filled the mouth of the hole. Then she started scratching all round the area of the hole, making the surface so level that no trace of a hole could be seen. Then she flew away. After a short absence, back she came and stayed motionless close to the hole with her head bent down (Was she listening for any sign of life left in her victim?) Then she began to scratch in a larger area, still levelling the ground and hiding any trace of working. We then left her, and after an hour, found her still levelling.

## EDUCATIONAL RENAISSANCE.

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National Education Union as developed by herself after a lifetime of study on the subject.

"Children are born persons with the appetite for knowledge, just as they have the appetite for food. But we so often, in our ignorance, kill that appetite and give them a kind of mental indigestion, as a result of the meagre fare we provide, from which many never recover. And so the sales of the Sunday newspapers go up and the well-bound volume of Shakespeare remains on the shelf. We bore boys with our stupidity and the constant 'going over' of the same work, trying to 'get them on' quickly for some approaching examination, cramming them in their weak subjects. Education, like growth, is a slow and gradual process, but we keep looking for results. We do not pull the food from children's mouths to see if they are digesting it, but that is what we do with the food we offer for their minds.

"All the best in literature should be within the reach of children, not dull text-books and poor abridgements. They should read things once and repeat them: then they will know what they have read. A teacher's powers of self-expression, style of writing and power of thought are often poor, but the best of the world's writings, thought and culture, is to be found in books.

"And so Miss Mason sees in the faults of our present Educational system the birth of strikes, blind following of poor leadership because men will not think for themselves, over-athleticism, lack of culture, the golf bore, the unsporting soccer crowds and many such things. Perhaps she claims too much, and yet her whole outlook is very sound and her sincerity cannot but impress the reader.

"With her claims for the freedom of the child from influences of fear and love, for her plea for a far wider curriculum and a better understanding of our literature, and for a better understanding of art and music, I am in entire agreement, and I think that everyone who is trying to find better methods of teaching and attempting to understand the Educational needs of the day should read this book, for they will get much help and food for thought from it."

*The Nottingham Guardian.*—"The work of Miss Charlotte M. Mason, of Ambleside, which led to the establishment of the P.N.E.U. method and to many other revolutionary changes in matters educational, has been widely recognised among educationists. Its results may be discerned in many departments of our present-day system of education. To her is owed a great debt of gratitude, because to her writings may be in large measure attributed the change

in outlook of most adults towards children, a change which has had most beneficial effects for the world at large. It may be that her teachings have yet to attain their full measure of achievement: education at present in this country is a somewhat muddled affair, but the future is full of interest and hope in the development of the axioms set forth with so much truth, sympathy and persuasiveness in Miss Mason's books.

"Her 'Essay Towards a Philosophy of Education,' of which a new edition now appears, was first published in 1925. In it she first summarises and then explains her beliefs and her experiences in regard to the quest for a liberal education for all children. Her primary axiom, enunciated in the days before the war, when educational principles were very different from the conception of education which she championed, was: Children are born *persons*. The child's individuality was recognised—if not for the first time, yet the thought was first thus incisively expressed by Miss Mason as part of an educational creed. She believed that children are not born either good or bad, but with possibilities for good and for evil. There must be respect on the part of adults for the personality of children, which respect limits the adult to three educational instruments: the atmosphere of environment, the discipline of habit, and the presentation of living ideas.

"Education is the science of relations," is another of Miss Mason's axioms or definitions. She means that a child has natural relations with a vast number of things and thoughts; so he must be trained on physical exercises, nature lore, handicrafts, science and art, and upon many living books. So in devising a syllabus for a normal child of any social status she laid down the necessity of considering three points: the child requires much knowledge, for the mind needs sufficient food as much as does the body; the knowledge should be various, for sameness in mental diet does not create appetite (i.e., curiosity); and knowledge should be communicated in well-chosen language, because his attention responds naturally to what is conveyed in literary form. The expansion of these and other basic principles into a philosophy of education makes of this a fascinating book for teachers, parents and all who are concerned with the problems presented by childhood."

*The Church Times.*—"Miss Charlotte Mason's concern is with children, and particularly with young children. She believes that young minds have a natural appetite for knowledge, and they need to be fed with ideas, as bodies must be nourished on 'food convenient for them.'

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In actual practice this natural appetite is often spoiled, and interest blunted, by the distracting stimulus of marks, competitions for prizes, examinations, and all the hocus-pocus by which children's attention is turned from knowledge to the entirely different business of pleasing parents or teachers, satisfying examiners, and out-distancing their companions.

"The other primary fault in our education, in Miss Mason's experience, is that the books we use in schools are not books at all, but text-books and manuals which serve up pre-digested facts in an uninteresting fashion, but never 'ideas,' which are really what the mind needs and can assimilate. These are explained at unnecessary length by the teacher, and 'impressed upon the memory' by repetition. And the result is what we all know it to be. Most people, at whatever age they leave school, to whatever social class they belong, have no interest in, or desire for, knowledge.

"The experience of Miss Mason and her fellow-workers in the P.N.E.U. has convinced them that children delight in knowledge if it is presented to them in the form of great literature. Even young children can read and enjoy a good book, and reproduce in their own words what they have read, and will still know what they have read, without 'revision,' months afterwards. There is no need for the teacher to intrude himself, with his boring explanations, between the mind of the great writer and the mind of the child. His part is to guide and encourage, to offer the right books at the right time, to see that the intellectual diet is wide and varied, and, above all, first-class. And he must teach such things as mathematics and, perhaps, grammar, which are the tools the child needs in his search for knowledge.

"Miss Mason is a Churchwoman, and she would offer the knowledge of God to a child as early, and as naturally, as other knowledge. She holds very strongly that religious and moral knowledge is not to be conveyed in 'lessons,' but in the concrete, human, assimilable form of stories, whether history, biography, or parable, presented in literary form. . . .

"The book is of more than ordinary interest and value, and will repay thoughtful reading."

*Liverpool Post.*—"A welcome new edition of Miss Charlotte M. Mason's last and, in some respects, most important work."

*Everyman.*—"Many years ago Miss Mason founded her method at Ambleside, and her ideas have since been accepted all over the world. She believes that children revel in learning, and that the young mind should be fed with many ideas and left to select those that appeal to it. This book shows the

*The 2nd child of  
the Parson's Reni*

"It would be impossible to touch on even a minority of the points emphasised in this suggestive book. Not everyone will follow the writer in her optimism as to the ~~xi~~ ability of the average child, but all must agree that the largesse she suggests is advisable so that those who hunger (even if it be only the few) may be fed. Every liberal thinker must follow her, too, in her indignation against mere vocational training. The child must at least have the chance of "education which will qualify him for life rather than for earning a living."

(The Westminster Gazette)

"There can be little doubt that Miss Mason is here getting at the roots of her subject. There is too much adult depreciation of the child mind, with all its potentialities and powers of insight and comprehension.

(The Scotsman)

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This is the last, and in some respects the most important and comprehensive work of Miss Mason, of Ambleside, the practical results of whose original thought on education is seen in all parts of the world in the system known as the P.N.E.U. (Parents' National Education Union). Though one cannot summarize so revolutionary and far-reaching an educational system in a few words, one may say this at least, that for Miss Mason the child *is a person*, with a mind to be fed with knowledge, and great thoughts and concepts, not *trained*—for education is not a training, but “an atmosphere, a discipline, a life,” and knowledge “the necessary daily food of the mind.”

*Post Edition of*

# AN ESSAY TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

*Second Edition  
Smaller*

*by Charlotte Mason  
founder  
of  
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Institution Union  
(P.N.U.)  
The Parents' Union Schools  
The Charlotte Mason  
Training College*

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CHARLOTTE  
M. MASON

and her message. It is a book of much wisdom, and refreshing alike for its respect for children and for its respect for experience. Miss Mason had studied education too long to be carried away by stunts and panaceas, however seductive. She had the true pioneer's suspicion of seeming short cuts. She knew, like Sir Rabindranath Tagore, that the process of growing can only be done by the grower; and, like Ruskin, that the mind of a child may be trusted to take or reject according to its needs; that knowledge cannot be digested in tabloid form, be the tabloids made never so skilfully; that out of a "whole big book" a child "may not get more than half-a-dozen of those ideas upon which his spirit thrives," and that such ideas occur "in unexpected places and unrecognised forms." "One of our presumptuous sins," she declared, "is that we venture to offer opinions to children (and to older persons) instead of ideas. The mind feeds on ideas, and therefore children should have a generous curriculum."

Further, Miss Mason cherished a steadfast belief in the child. She realised clearly what most teachers fail to realise (or, at all events, to embody in their system of teaching), that children are well able to deal with ideas. Therefore, she placed little reliance on the ordinary catechetical methods employed in the class-room. Much of the questioning to which children are subjected is a hindrance rather than a help to their understanding (for Nature designed them to ask rather than to answer questions), and, if it does not spoil their tempers as it would the temper of the most phlegmatic grown-up, this is only because children are so extraordinarily patient—"Patient of contradiction as a child" is the simile Cowper chose when he had to describe the humility of the truly great, and it is one which teachers will do well to ponder. Miss Mason's method is one of narration, oral and written. She realised that no one can recount anything without considerable mental effort—the mind having constantly to put questions to itself if it would proceed. In other words, she realised that Literature, as Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch told a Cambridge audience, is an art to be practised; and that in History, as Lord Acton told another Cambridge audience, one must "learn as much by writing as by reading."

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In teaching literature it would be difficult to improve upon Miss Mason's method. It places the child and the author in direct contact, without the intervention of a third party; and on its expression side, the narration, it makes appeal to two fundamental instincts of childhood, the desire to imitate and the desire to create. She anticipated Mr. Wells in insisting upon some general history (ancient, European and Colonial) being included in her curriculum. She is still in front of most teachers in including systematic study of pictures and art. If her view that "the approach to science, as to other subjects, should be more or less literary" wins less general acceptance, we cannot, on the other hand, claim that, by other methods we have attained to any marked degree of success in teaching science. The common result of the ordinary methods is that, while the student may acquire some ability to measure, experiment, and observe, he shows a lamentable lack of knowledge of larger principles, broad conceptions, and everyday applications. Miss Mason deplored the "fatal and quite unnecessary divorce between science and the humanities," and few can quarrel with her declaration that "the only sound method of teaching science is to afford a due combination of field or laboratory work with such literary comments and amplifications as the subject affords."

But this book is much more than an exposition of any system or method. It is a treatise on education itself—a book of mellow wisdom, clearly and beautifully written, in which no teacher, however widely he differ from Miss Mason in outlook, can fail to find much to arrest him. One could quote from page after page, but three quotations, dealing with marks, motives, and psycho-analysis, must suffice:—

"A school may be working hard, not for love of knowledge, but for love of marks, our old enemy; and then young faces are not serene and joyous, but eager, restless, apt to look anxious and worried. The children do not sleep well and are cross; are sullen or in tears if anything goes wrong, and are, generally, difficult to manage. When this is the case there is too much oxygen in the air; they are breathing a too stimulating atmosphere, . . . the doctors probably

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What A Few Little Books Tell Us About Her  
to Kindly Open to Close We Will Be Used for the Purpose  
Please Return

### Reviews

"Many will be glad to read this full and reasonable account of her philosophy. (Journal of Education)

"Charlotte Mason deals simply and sympathetically with the child as a self-educator, and with the nature and extent of the co-operation by parent or teacher. She deserves to be carefully read in the home and in the school. Unless her standpoint is accepted there can be no real education, for it is fundamentally true that no one can teach a child anything - the child must be its own teacher." (The Glasgow Herald.)

"In her last volume Charlotte Mason sets out her philosophy of education with great wealth and variety of illustration. As she says in her Preface "No statement that I have made in the following volume rests upon opinion only. Every point has been proved in thousands of instances, and the method may be seen at work in many schools, large and small, elementary and secondary." ..... Here is a last arresting passage: "Human nature was not failed; what has failed us is philosophy, and that applied philosophy which is called education." (The Statesman, Calcutta).

"This is a book which deserves to be considered seriously by educational reformers. We welcome particularly the recognition that an educational programme can only justify itself if it can be applied to the whole nation - to the children of the poor as well as those who are better off." (The Church Times).

"Charlotte Mason's essay is, indeed, a valuable and serious contribution to Education itself and to the psychology on which true education must rest. . . . Here is set out, both theory and practice, the right way, the way along which the ideal of a 'Liberal Education for All' can be secured. (Time and Tide).

"This essay is more in the nature of a statement of faith than a philosophical treatise. As a record of the ideas which came to a great teacher in the course of many years' practical experience it will be of permanent value to all educationalists.". (The Daily News)

"She was a woman, not of one idea, but of a large and sagacious mind - one of those unobtrusive yet powerful thinkers whose real greatness will better be appreciated by future generations than their modesty suffers it to be by their own." (The Guardian)

"The late Charlotte Mason was a Prophet of the P.N.E.U. and like all prophets, from Isaiah onwards, she was an enthusiast. (The Times of India)

"This, Miss Charlotte Mason's last book, which she died <sup>1892</sup> not live to see in print, in many ways sums up her teaching and her message. It is a book of much wisdom, and refreshing alike for its respect for children and for its respect for experience. Miss Mason had studied education too long to be carried away by stunts and panaceas, however seductive. She has the true pioneer's suspicion of seeming short cuts. . . . One of our presumptuous sins,' she declared, 'is that we venture to offer opinions to children (and to older persons) instead of ideas. The mind feeds on ideas, and therefore children should have a generous curriculum." . . . .

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"There is a multitude here, and in other lands, to whom this lucid exposition of vitally important principle and of the method of its application will come as a veritable discovery.

But this will depend on our shaking ourselves free of an erroneous view of the nature and working of the human mind."

(Dr. Edward Lyttleton)

18P3CMCH424

"This, Miss Charlotte Mason's last book, which she did not live to see in print, in many ways sums up her teaching and her message. It is a book of much wisdom, and refreshing alike for its respect for children and for its respect for experience. Miss Mason had studied education too long to be carried away by stunts and panaceas, however seductive. She has the true pioneer's suspicion of seeming short cuts. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ One of our presumptuous sins,' she declared, 'is that we venture to offer opinions to children (and to older persons) instead of ideas. The mind feeds on ideas, and therefore children should have a generous curriculum." . . . .

"But this book is much more than an exposition of any system or method. It is a treatise on education itself - a book of mellow wisdom, clearly and beautifully written, in which no teacher, however widely he differ with Miss Mason in outlook, can fail to find much to arrest him. (The Teachers' World)

"There is a multitude here, and in other lands, to whom this lucid exposition of vitally important principle and of the method of its application will come as a veritable discovery.

But this will depend on our shaking ourselves free of an erroneous view of the nature and working of the human mind."

(Dr. Edward Lyttleton)

"It would be impossible to touch on even a minority of the points emphasised in this suggestive book. Not everyone will follow the writer in her optimism as to the hi ability of the average child, but all must agree that the largesse she suggests is advisable so that those who hunger (even if it be only the few) may be fed. Every liberal thinker must follow her, too, in her indignation against mere vocational training. The child must at least have the chance of "education which will qualify him for life rather than for earning a living."

(The Westminster Gazette)

2  
i8p4CMCH24

Sir Michael Sadler, K.C.S.I., C.B., late Vice-Chancellor Leeds University.

"She threw 'a shaft of light across the land.' She loved England and therefore had at heart the upbringing of the children of England. She longed that they should have what to her had been beyond price - the habit of reading great books which disclose the mind of man, seen in the light of 'a far-off divine event.'"

19 p1 CMCH24

The little Memorandum which was privately printed and sent out at Christmas from Ambleside has brought a number of letters. Our Chairman was of the opinion that members of the Council might like to see one or two extracts. ~~The members of the Council~~ They may ~~have~~ <sup>(over 80  
still  
living)</sup> have seen this Memorandum in the December "Parents' Review" where the editor gave it hospitality.

Extractions:-

- "Here are some extracts:-
1. Your vivid note on Miss Mason's ideas is very interesting... We thought it might be a chapter of your new book. . . but on further reading I think it is rather a preliminary exploration of one aspect of her thought which has not taken its final form; whichever it is, it certainly repays perusal."
  2. "It is a very striking little pamphlet and should stimulate people to think and read more on the subject."
  3. "It is the "wholeness" of her thought which is so striking, there are heaps of "good ideas" about but no one gives this complete picture which is so satisfying."
  4. "I am constantly amazed at the way her words fit current thought and are even in advance of it, and also in what a masterly way each detail is related to the whole. This I think is the idea that emerges so clearly from the Memorandum."

(5) "Recently I have been reading in 'Ourselves' in the mornings as a result of which I have been able to accept and make my own all Miss Mason's teaching as set out in the 'Synopsis'. The last hurdle was 'children are born neither good nor bad. . . I have already given several talks to our Mothers' Union with 'Ourselves' as a background. (The writer has grown up children brought up in the F.U.S.)....."

✓ C.R. (6) "It is especially interesting to me who was at College at the beginning of the Century when Miss Mason's philosophy of life and education were new and epoch-making. How privileged we were to be sharing these ideas which are only now fifty years since being fully understood".....

✓ C.R. (7) "Your historical survey is enlightening. Miss Mason gave her ideas to the world in a form complete; they could be enlarged but never altered."

Terr. C (8) "What a wonderful conception and how it has borne fruit! I do hope all the series of books will be reprinted."

de (7) (9) "I have just had occasion to read 'Home Education', 'School Education' and 'Parents and Children', and am as ever amazed at their wisdom; how ultra-modern they are! I never hear a lecture on education which I feel is new since my days at Scale Head!"

✓ C.R. (10) "The Memorandum has shown Charlotte Mason in quite a new light or rather the sequence of her thought in a new light and I now want to read her books again".

✓ C.R. (11) "We have an excellent groundwork plan .... I must get out my books and read up the various chapters as my mind wants clear refreshment of the whole subject".

C.R. (12) "I have turned to 'Home Education' again.. ~~and am proceeding~~ ~~since 1914~~ . . . It seems here as if one is trying to do the impossible in teaching a group of sixteen children whose ages range from 10 to 16 plus. They are mostly children who need special attention mentally or physically. In spite of the very little one

C.R. (13) "It is this term time again for so many of us!"

Please return  
these with your book  
waiting for Mr. H. W. Lethbridge

1953 CMG 424  
Rough copy

Report of Book Sub-Committee

1. The Books Sub-committee are able to report that "School Education" will soon be published. The work on the ~~book is almost finished~~ <sup>is nearly</sup> ~~ready to find room in stock-room~~ <sup>in</sup> week.
2. "Home Education" - stock in hand should last about two years,
3. The supply of "Parents and Children" is low.
4. "Ourselves" has been out of print since 1947 and there are several requests for it. <sup>has been</sup>
5. "Children as Persons" ~~is being~~ reprinted through the "Parents' Review".
6. Correspondence about "An Essay towards a Philosophy of Education" is ~~not yet finished~~ <sup>is enclosed</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~the morning~~ <sup>the morning</sup>.   
~~The copy is now ready for this year.~~

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C.R.L.  
1952

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1952

~~Please send a few memoranda from the letters.~~

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